

Touring the streets of Oaklandon

Buildings along roads each tell a story

By Victor Harris

In honor of Old Oaklandon Days, a little history of Oaklandon might be in order. I can write only about those things that I know about firsthand, but here are some memories, a bit of history and a tour through Old Oaklandon.

Turn off Pendleton Pike and go north on Oaklandon Road to Fire Station No. 3, then northeast on Broadway until it joins Pendleton Pike again. You have just traveled Pendleton Pike as it was up to the 1930s. At that time, the bypass around Oaklandon was constructed.

In order to locate things of interest, go back to Pendleton Pike and turn north on Oaklandon Road. The large building on the northeast corner was Howard Hauser's automobile agency. The next building was AFNB/Bank One. The shopping center on the west side of the road is in the outfield of Oaklandon High School's former baseball diamond. The Oaklandon School building stood on the high ground just north of the shopping center. It was a 2½-story building housing all 12 grades. Class sizes were 15-20 pupils.

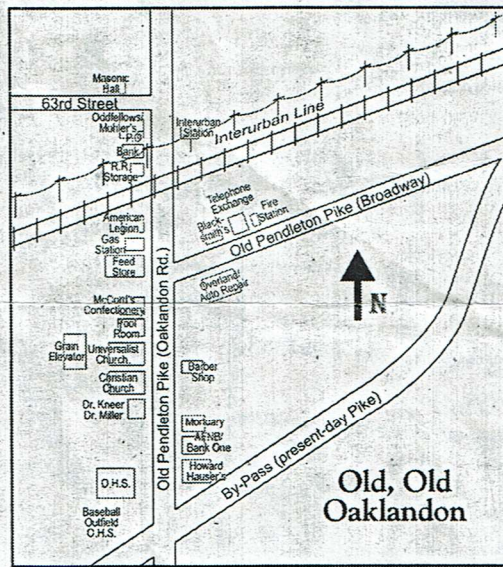
The second house north of the bank building on the east side of Oaklandon Road was Erbin "Mickey" McCord's mortuary. My mother was buried from this mortuary in 1956. Mickey and wife Elsie were fine, compassionate people and friends to everyone.

Across the street and a little further north is a tall, red brick house. This was Dr. Kneer's family residence and medical office. His family practice included all athletic examinations. Later on, Dr. Joe Miller had his office in this same building.

Travel further north to the barber shop. This has been a barber shop ever since I can remember. For years, John McGinnis and his family resided there, and his shop was in the front room, the same as it is now.

Across Oaklandon Road are the two churches. The frame church was the Oaklandon Christian Church until the congregation moved into its new building across from Oaklandon Elementary School. The yellow brick building is the Oaklandon Universalist Church. Many of the high school functions were held in this church, since it had a larger stage and greater seating capacity than the high school auditorium. I received my high school diploma in this church.

Directly west of the Oaklandon Universalist Church was the grain-elevator office,



Oaklandon, in the 1930s, was a village where everyone knew everyone else.

and further west was the elevator itself. Farmers hauled corn and other grain here for unloading and sale.

The vacant lot next to the church used to be a poolroom. This building was destroyed by fire and never rebuilt.

The next building north was Mickey McCord's confectionery. He sold over-the-counter drugs and candy, and would even whip you up a hamburger, hot dog or bowl of soup. Later, on Maynard Bough's drug store occupied this building.

The next building (now Dave's Market) was Hobart Weaver's feed store. You could buy hay, straw and ground feeds for all farm animals, as well as other farm supplies.

In the parking lot of Dave's Market, you can see remains of the foundation of Everett Harting's gas station.

We will return to this point on Oaklandon Road in a moment, but for now let's travel up Broadway beside Fire Station No. 3. On the right, the large building was Leigh Fisher's Chevrolet dealership. Later, it was Howard Hauser's auto repair.

Travel northeast to the first house on the left (located in the southeast corner of the Play Park). This was the Oaklandon telephone exchange. Mrs. Negley was the operator, and at that time the phones were magnetic crank instruments. Just west of the telephone office was a blacksmith shop, where Adam was the blacksmith.

The little red brick building just northeast of the telephone office was the original Oaklandon Fire Department. I know, when you look at that little building, you will think I am mistaken, because a large passenger car would hardly fit in the building today.

Going back to Oaklandon Road, the

American Legion Building was just north where Dave's Market now stands. This building was destroyed by fire and was later rebuilt.

As we get to the railroad, on the left was a small storage building for the railroad. Mail personnel would hang the mail bags on an arm alongside of the track; the mail car would pick up the bag while the train was in motion.

The red brick building on the north of the tracks was the Oaklandon State Bank. Assistant cashier Edgar Mock remembers this building only too well; he remembers the bank being robbed one time and so many people came running out with firearms that the bandits were caught a quarter-mile down 63rd Street in an abandoned building.

Next to this building is the foundation of the O.W. Mohler & Son grocery. The office was in the southeast corner of the building. Upstairs in the building was the headquarters of the Independent Order of Oddfellows (IOOF). Leslie and Helen Mohler ran this store many years.

Down 63rd Street stands the new Municipal Hall. Between the new building and the old house on the corner of Oaklandon Road stood the old Masonic Hall, which existed for more than 100 years. It was torn down after the new building was completed.

Back on Oaklandon Road, as you travel north past the houses on either side, north of the utility poles in each direction from the road. This was the old interurban line station. You bought a ticket and the station master would turn on a red light, signaling the interurban operator to stop for passengers. The interurban traveled along the railroad down to 38th Street, followed 38th Street along the north side to Fall Creek by the State Fairgrounds, and continued on to Dale and into the station (now the bus station). It controlled the stoplights so one could travel from Oaklandon to the State House in about 20 minutes. Interurbans were powered by overhead electrical lines and sped along at about 70 mph. Line extended in all directions from Indian Lake, Ohio, what modern-day people would call such a mass-transportation system!

Looking to the north, on the left is the new Oaklandon Elementary School. On the right is the new Oaklandon Christian Church.

For old-timers in Oaklandon, I trust this article has brought back a few pleasant memories. For our new friends, maybe a little bit of history will help you appreciate your community a little more.